



Policy and Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning for Admissions to the University of Edinburgh

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To set out the University of Edinburgh's position on the recognition of prior learning (RPL) for admissions purposes.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The University of Edinburgh is committed to increasing the diversity of its student population by presenting no unnecessary barriers in its admissions selection processes to prospective students currently underrepresented in higher education.
- 2.2 The University recognises that some prospective students may not be able to evidence that they meet the University's entry requirements through the accepted qualifications detailed in University publications, but they are able to provide substantial and relevant alternative evidence that they have the potential to succeed on their chosen programme.
- 2.3 This policy sets out the process by which evidence of prior learning can be fairly and consistently assessed for the purpose of admission to the University.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The policy covers the recognition of prior learning in the admissions process only. Arrangements for the transfer of credit from prior learning are set out in the University of Edinburgh Degree Regulations.
- 3.2 The policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate admissions.
- 3.3 This policy does not encompass standard work experience entry requirements.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 **Prior certificated learning** is learning which has been formally assessed and certificated. It includes non-standard qualifications, certificated study from other higher education institutions, professional and vocational qualifications.
- 4.2 **Prior experiential learning** is learning gained through substantial, relevant experience which has not been formally assessed. This may include work experience or knowledge gained through experiences outside work. The emphasis is on the learning achieved through the experience, and not just on the experience itself.

5. Procedure

- 5.1 Prior learning can be recognised in both the undergraduate and the postgraduate admissions process.
- 5.2 The University of Edinburgh can accept an applicant into the selection process for a degree programme where the applicant can evidence that their previous learning experiences meets the following criteria:
 - **Relevance** –the learning gained provides the applicant with knowledge and skills which are relevant to the programme applied for.
 - **Sufficient** –the learning gained is of an equivalent academic level to the standard entry requirement, and that the quantity of prior learning is considered to be sufficient to demonstrate the applicant’s potential.
 - **Verifiable** –the evidence provided can be authenticated as being the outcome of the learner’s own effort.
 - **Recent** –the learning meets the University’s requirement for recent study.
- 5.3 Where RPL is regularly used in the admissions process for a particular programme, detailed information will be available for applicants about what evidence they will be required to provide, and how this will be used in the admissions process.
- 5.4 Where RPL is not regularly used, consideration will be on an individual basis. It is essential, therefore, that an applicant who wishes to make an application based on RPL discusses this with the relevant admissions office or School admissions staff **before** an application is submitted, to ensure that there is evidence that the criteria can be met.
- 5.5 Evidence will vary depending on the nature of the prior learning which is being demonstrated and the programme being applied to, but may include:
 - Certificates and course outlines from non-standard qualifications
 - CV and/or work reference
 - Portfolio
 - Written assignment
 - Interview

6. RPL for undergraduate admissions

- 6.1 Non-standard qualifications and prior experiential learning will only be considered for admission to an undergraduate degree programme where an applicant has had a break of at least three years in his/her formal education.
- 6.2 Anyone wishing to submit an undergraduate application based on RPL **must** discuss this with the appropriate admissions office prior to making an application, to ensure that the previous learning experiences meet the criteria set out in 5.2 above in relation to the programme they wish to apply to. The admissions office will also agree what evidence will be required to verify the prior learning. Failure to do this may mean that evidence required to assess the application is missing, leading to an unsuccessful application.
- 6.3 Agreement to consider an application based on RPL is not a guarantee that an offer will be made. Where there are more applications than there are places available, there will be a competitive selection process in which an application based on RPL will be

considered alongside other applications for the same programme. The application based on RPL will be assessed on the quality demonstrated through the evidence provided to support the RPL claim.

7. RPL for postgraduate taught admissions

- 7.1 Anyone wishing to submit an application based on RPL **must** contact the appropriate College or School admissions office prior to making an application, to ensure that the previous learning experiences meet the criteria set out in 5.2 above in relation to the programme they wish to apply to. Where RPL is used regularly, admissions staff will be able to advise on the process to be followed and the evidence that will be required to support the application. In other circumstances, the evidence required to support an application based on RPL will be considered on a case by case basis. Failure to discuss the application in advance this may mean that evidence required to assess the application is missing, leading to an unsuccessful application.
- 7.3 Agreement to consider an application based on RPL is not a guarantee that an offer will be made. Where there are more applications than there are places available, there will be a competitive selection process in which the application based on RPL will be considered alongside other applications for the same programme. The application based on RPL will be assessed on the quality demonstrated through the evidence provided to support the RPL claim.

8. RPL for postgraduate research admissions

- 8.1 Applicants for PhD and MPhil programmes may be able to have RPL taken into consideration, which may be evidenced through previously published work. An applicant who wishes to have non-standard evidence considered as part of their application should contact the relevant School to discuss this prior to making an application.

9. Monitoring and review

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed one year after implementation, and any proposed changes will be submitted to the Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group for approval.

Policy approved: September 2014

Review: September 2015